

Panel Discussion (contd)

1 Oregon over 20 years have negotiated, or
2 15 years, whatever it is, a very strong
3 program. That means that the risk is reduced,
4 but it's not inherently safe.

5 And the second and the last point
6 is: Unfortunately, when DOE doesn't consider
7 those risks, and they haven't in this case,
8 that's when states can go to court, citizen
9 groups go to court, and we can stop them at
10 least for the time being. And that's what
11 we've done.

12 MR. MICHAEL COLLINS: Just a
13 statement here. I haven't said it a lot, but
14 DOE and Gerry and Shelley and other folks are
15 going to disagree on a lot of things, and this
16 is one of them, so --

17 MR. DEE WILLIS: Ms. Roth, did
18 you get your question answered?

19 MS. SANDRA ROTH: Uh-huh.

20 MR. DEE WILLIS: Who's next?
21 Next question or comment.

22 MR. KEN NILES: Can I ask a
23 question of Mike from Oregon Department of
24 Transportation, if you would.

25 Do you have any plans for total

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1 reconstruction of bridges that would require
2 rerouting of all trucks on 84 in the near
3 future?

4 MR. MIKE BARRY: Well, I saw
5 your chart up there. What ODOT does,
6 generally, and speaking on the freeways, we
7 always try to stage traffic on the freeway.

8 Because in any community, sending
9 all of the freeway traffic through a community,
10 hazardous or not, is not a very popular option.
11 So we spend a lot of money doing that.

12 There was a couple of places, I saw
13 you mention 120-mile detour. We have some
14 bridges that are cracking.

15 And as they crack, we monitor those
16 structures and we make some engineering
17 determinations about what kind of loads they
18 can continue to carry.

19 Now, these structures right outside
20 of La Grande, at one time, were clear down to
21 80,000 pounds, which is the basic load that is
22 allowed for trucks on the interstate.

23 We oftentimes allow, in fact a lot
24 of loads, up to 105,000 pounds. With an
25 \$8 permit you can carry that much extra.

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1 But the rub is you also get to pay
2 extra weight mile tax when you do that, so
3 that's okay.

4 But in the long run, you know, we
5 ran out there and we fixed that right away, so
6 we could get that back up to the 105,000
7 pounds.

8 So those long detours are, generally
9 speaking, the oversized loads in terms of
10 weight, okay. So these loads, I would suspect,
11 are going to be pretty much legal loads.

12 And as legal loads, they're going to
13 stay on that route whenever possible. And for
14 the most part, I think, on the interstate
15 system, that means very short detours or staged
16 construction so that we can allow that.

17 So out west here, we're going to
18 detour all the traffic on to one structure,
19 tear down that one, rebuild it, and then do the
20 same to the other structure the next year.

21 And so we can keep those trucks on
22 the route.

23 MS. SHELLEY CIMON: Mike, can
24 you speak to the numbers? Because I think the
25 last that I'd heard, we see between 15- and

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1 18,000 cars, vehicles come through this valley
2 a day; and about 8,000 of them, 6- to 8,000 are
3 trucks.

4 MR. MIKE BARRY: It's 8,000 on
5 the interstate here.

6 MS. SHELLEY CIMON: 8,000 a
7 day, total.

8 MR. MIKE BARRY: Yeah.
9 Island City strip, 16,000 -- or 1,600. 16,000,
10 yeah.

11 MS. SHELLEY CIMON: 16,000.

12 MR. MIKE BARRY: Yeah. It's a
13 lot of trucks. So on the interstate, it's
14 8,000. And we have one of the highest
15 truck-to-car ratios in the country. We have
16 46 percent trucks on our interstate.

17 MS. SHELLEY CIMON: Thank you.

18 MR. DEE WILLIS: Next question.
19 This is your chance to yell at the Government.

20 MR. KEN NILES: Dee, let me
21 make one real quick comment. And this is for
22 our facilitator and the rest of you.

23 Are you guys enjoying this format?
24 I think it's great, this question and answer.
25 And I would encourage Dee to try and use it in

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1 other public meetings when the audience allows
2 it and when it works good. But I'm enjoying
3 this and I hope others are finding it
4 informative.

5 MR. DEE WILLIS: We'll give you
6 body armor in Seattle.

7 MR. MICHAEL COLLINS: And can I
8 just add something. You need a better DOE
9 public speaker up here for this kind of format.

10 MS. SHELLEY CIMON: Well,
11 you're it.

12 MS. JACQUE LEE-OBERTEUFFER: My
13 name is Jacque Lee-Oberteuffer. And I have a
14 question, just so I know that we're speaking
15 the language. I don't know what vitrification
16 means.

17 And I'm hearing it at some Safeway
18 store, the waste. And I'm just not clear. So
19 I'd just like an explanation.

20 MR. MICHAEL COLLINS: Basically
21 what they do is they mix the waste with sand or
22 frit or something like that, heat it up real
23 high and so it turns into glass.

24 MR. DEE WILLIS: This is liquid
25 waste.

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1 MR. MICHAEL COLLINS: Liquid
2 waste from the tanks is what they're proposing
3 it for.

4 MS. JACQUE LEE-OBERTEUFFER:
5 Does it actually have to --

6 MR. MICHAEL COLLINS: No.
7 They're building the vitrification plant right
8 now. It's probably several years out. I don't
9 know what their schedule is.

10 MS. JACQUE LEE-OBERTEUFFER: So
11 is that supposed to make it less radioactive?

12 MR. MICHAEL COLLINS: No. But
13 it contains it better.

14 MS. JACQUE LEE-OBERTUEFFER: It
15 contains it. So it doesn't liquefy into the
16 water table --

17 MR. MICHAEL COLLINS: So it
18 doesn't, called, what's leach out as easy.

19 MR. DEE WILLIS: Will you
20 clarify the DEIS note about that?

21 MS. JACQUE LEE-OBERTEUFFER:
22 Right.

23 MR. MICHAEL COLLINS: Where it
24 touches on vitrification is what's called the
25 immobilized low-activity waste, which is a

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1 fraction of the tank waste. And we do look at
2 the disposal of that fraction of the tank
3 waste.

4 MR. GERRY POLLET: Fraction is,
5 to be exact, we're talking about moving, which
6 is what I think Senator Wyden was referring to.

7 The Hanford cleanup agreement
8 requires 100 percent of this waste to be
9 glassified by the year 2028. All of the liquid
10 waste, from these high-level waste tanks,
11 53 million gallons, million gallons, which is
12 already --

13 MS. JACQUE LEE-OBERTEUFFER: So
14 that means, opening up each tank?

15 MR. GERRY POLLET: Pumping it
16 out, because a teaspoon full of this waste in
17 this room would kill us all. It's so
18 radioactive.

19 So it gets pumped out remotely and
20 gets brought to the vitrification plant. The
21 first vitrification plant they're building,
22 it's a set of three really, but it's not going
23 to be big enough to do all 53 million gallons
24 by 2028.

25 And the administration has issued a

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1 new set of goals that said that they would
2 eliminate vitrification of 75 to 80 percent of
3 the waste.

4 And that waste, instead of being
5 glassified, they're talking about using cement
6 and other things and burying it in these
7 shallow trenches instead of glassifying it and
8 having it stored retrievably for possibly going
9 to deep underground geologic repository in
10 Yucca Mountain, Nevada, or somewhere else.

11 So it would stay forever in
12 Hanford's shallow trenches, 80 percent of the
13 waste, it's not a fraction any more.

14 MR. DEE WILLIS: Did you get
15 your question answered?

16 MS. JACQUE LEE-OBERTEUFFER:
17 Yes.

18 MR. MICHAEL COLLINS: Just a
19 little addition to that. Those alternative
20 treatment technologies that Gerry was talking
21 about, the grout and those sort of things,
22 they're going to be discussed as part of
23 another Environmental Impact Statement, which I
24 believe you're going to have a chance to
25 comment on in September. Don't quote me on

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1 that date, but --

2 MS. SHELLEY CIMON: I guess I'd
3 like to speak to that too, because really
4 what's lacking in this huge document is a
5 comprehensive understanding of all of the waste
6 and its ultimate disposition at this site. And
7 that's probably one of the biggest issues.

8 And I know one of the things we
9 haven't touched on at all is groundwater. I
10 think Owen mentioned, actually the fact that
11 it's sitting on the basalt. I didn't realize
12 you knew that. You get an A tonight.

13 But I attended meetings last week.
14 Part of this document leans on what's called
15 the System Assessment Capability, which is a
16 model that is being touted.

17 And I know you would say that it
18 isn't misrepresented. But I believe that
19 people who don't understand what the
20 limitations are of the SAC, the System
21 Assessment Capability, do think that it is a
22 one-size-fits-all for understanding groundwater
23 movement. And it isn't.

24 And that's a very big concern, that
25 we aren't able to quantify how groundwater is

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1 moving at the site.

2 I attended meetings last week that
3 were hosted by the Molecular Sciences Lab, and
4 they were called the principle investigators
5 workshops.

6 And this is an opportunity, four
7 days of letting scientists roll out their
8 latest research. And I sat in on the
9 groundwater portions of it for a Tuesday
10 afternoon, because I wanted to hear what the
11 latest and greatest was.

12 And to a scientist, they began with
13 the caveat: My motto won't comprehensively
14 tell, you know, explain fate and transport of
15 water at this site.

16 And we're looking at one, two,
17 three, four -- there were suites of models that
18 were being used by these scientists in very
19 different ways; models that independently
20 cannot begin to comprehensively describe what's
21 going on with groundwater.

22 And collectively, I can't even begin
23 to imagine how you could take them and utilize
24 them and paint a picture of what's really going
25 on on-site.

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1 So that was very illuminating for me
2 to go to those meetings and hear the cautionary
3 note of those discussions.

4 The other piece that I want to
5 mention again, it's very important, is this
6 issue of points of compliance.

7 This is where we draw a line in the
8 sand and we say "You've met a level at this
9 point that's unacceptable. And anything beyond
10 this physical location is unacceptable. We
11 don't want to see waste move any further."

12 And it's imperative, as Dennis Faulk
13 said from the Environmental Protection Agency,
14 that we set those points of compliance at the
15 operable unit boundaries, not a kilometer away
16 where we'd have to wait 20 years for a plume to
17 reach that point of compliance. And at that
18 point, it would be impossible to --

19 MR. DEE WILLIS: Plume?

20 MS. SHELLEY CIMON: Underground
21 plume of waste, be it radioactive or chemical.

22 We need a comprehensive document.
23 And this is not it. And I think that's one of
24 the biggest points that I'd like to see
25 everyone comment on and understand.

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1 And also, I guess, one of the
2 hardest things is that we don't know everything
3 that's going on in this document. And
4 collectively, we couldn't begin to describe it.
5 Those of us that are up here. And probably
6 won't be able to by the 27th.

7 MR. DEE WILLIS: Other
8 panelists?

9 MR. MICHAEL COLLINS: Just a
10 quick response on that. On the line of
11 analysis, we don't represent that as any kind
12 of point of compliance.

13 We did it to try to compare
14 alternatives from waste sources that are
15 dispersed, not only with the inventory of --
16 different burials grounds are, but physical
17 size of the burial grounds and the distances
18 between burial grounds.

19 So it was an attempt, comparison,
20 not a point of compliance.

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: What
22 do --

23 MR. MICHAEL COLLINS: Well,
24 what you do, what typically you do, there is a
25 DOE requirement that says, "Down the road, you

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1 will measure what the impacts are 100 meters
2 down gradient, down the groundwater flow of a
3 site. And you're supposed to do an analysis
4 there.

5 That's a point of compliance that
6 you have to meet. We didn't do a point of
7 compliance analysis.

8 What we did was we went farther out,
9 this kilometer that you've heard about before,
10 in an effort to try to compare the different
11 alternatives better, because once you get too
12 close to a specific facility, the impacts are
13 so dominated by that one facility that you
14 don't get the impacts of everything else.

15 MR. GERRY POLLET: And what
16 that means is that, the big picture, what that
17 means is: You sure as heck can tell if the
18 impact from any one of their massive new
19 landfills will be unacceptable.

20 Bottom line: We didn't do an
21 analysis to show what the impact is on
22 groundwater. And will it violate all the
23 groundwater protection standards from having a
24 landfill of this size with those wastes in this
25 place.

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1 And they need to redo it and then
2 come back out again, because they were told to
3 do it right last time, and this is where
4 they've got to do it right.

5 And we can't have them say "We'll do
6 it right in the final EIS," because that's too
7 late. Then they'll have chosen what landfills
8 they're already going to go ahead with.

9 We need to know this information now
10 or redo it. You've got to redo it, come back
11 out. No two choices.

12 MR. DEE WILLIS: Mr. Owen
13 Kenton?

14 MR. OWEN KENTON: Yes. I had a
15 question on the water issue again. And ever
16 since we've learned it takes --

17 MR. GERRY POLLET: Both of us?

18 MR. OWEN KENTON: For both of
19 you, yeah, everybody up there.

20 It takes about a hundred years or
21 more for water actually to get from there all
22 the way into the water table, actually.

23 And then it takes even longer for
24 that water table to clear out. So what are you
25 going to do about the unlined waste that isn't

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1 lined already, to clean out?

2 MR. MICHAEL COLLINS: I guess
3 I'm not following you. Are you talking about
4 waste that's already in the ground that was
5 dumped there because --

6 MR. OWEN KENTON: Yeah. What
7 are you going to do to prevent that from going
8 further into the ground? Are you going to line
9 that area also?

10 MR. MICHAEL COLLINS: Oh, no.
11 I mean, that underground -- you can't line
12 that. We're trying different strategies to
13 pump out groundwater and treat it.

14 We have what's called a vapor
15 extraction technology that we've taken out
16 70,000 some-odd pounds of carbon tetrachloride
17 that's in what's called the vadose zone area
18 between the site and the groundwater table.

19 There are some new alternative
20 treatment technologies being used out by the
21 river. I'm not super familiar with -- I'm not
22 at all familiar with them. I know they exist.
23 So there are efforts to clean up the
24 groundwater right now.

25 There's also efforts, and actually

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1 this effort ended in '95, for a long time
2 liquid waste disposal was okay. It's no longer
3 okay. We've stopped that.

4 MR. GERRY POLLET: It wasn't
5 okay.

6 MR. DEE WILLIS: No
7 interruptions.

8 Anybody else want to respond to that
9 question.

10 MR. KEN NILES: Ken Niles. I
11 just want to say one thing from the state's
12 perspective on groundwater.

13 They have made some great strides in
14 the past year in at least raising the issue of
15 what they're going to do in the future to deal
16 with groundwater. We don't think it's enough
17 yet.

18 Let me say, and this is a little --
19 this is not fully involved with this
20 Environmental Impact Statement. I'm talking
21 groundwater issues and concerns as a whole at
22 the Hanford site.

23 And let me just say one thing,
24 before I say that, is the Department of Energy
25 has made some great progress at Hanford in